

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

CHECK-LIST OF BIRDS OF THE WORLD, Vol. 6. By James Lee Peters. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1948: 6 × 9 in., xi + 259 pp. \$6.50.

The sixth volume of Peters' monumental check-list of world birds completes his account of the non-passerine birds. The woodpeckers are the only North American family treated in this volume; the other families listed are: jacamars, puff-birds, barbets, honey-guides, and toucans. (The wry-necks are included in the woodpecker family.)

Three of ten woodpecker genera of the A.O.U. Check-List are changed: "*Centurus*" and "*Balanosphyra*" are included in the genus *Melanerpes*; "*Hylatomus*" is placed in the genus *Dryocopus*, along with four other New World species and two Old World species. Many readers will be very curious to know the facts behind these changes, and I hope Peters will publish a brief analysis of these cases in an ornithological journal, as he has previously done in the case of certain hawks, doves, owls, and toucans.

The "publisher's note" on the jacket contains the good news that in this volume the author has followed the definite policy of listing all synonyms published since 1900 (the date of volume 2 of Sharpe's Hand-list—the last previous complete revision of most of these families).

Two preoccupied names have been replaced: *Picus canus* "*ricketti*," of southeastern China, and *Melanerpes* (*Centurus*) *rubricapillus* "*rubriventris*," of Yucatán.

Peters' total of 395 species in the order Piciformes shows remarkably close agreement with the 389 species estimated for the order by Ernst Mayr in 1946 (*Auk*, 63:66).

Below is a tabulation of the genera, species, and subspecies treated in this volume:

	Genera	Species	Subspecies
Galbulidae, Jacamars	5	16	38
Bucconidae, Puff-birds	10	33	76
Capitonidae, Barbets	13	78	255
Indicatoridae, Honey-guides	4	13	36
Ramphastidae, Toucans	5	41	87
Picidae, Woodpeckers and Wry-necks	38	214	855
Totals	75	395	1347

There is a surprisingly marked change in the type used in this volume compared with that used in the earlier ones. Unfortunately, the paper used is even poorer than that used in volume 5, which was far poorer than that used in volume 4.

It is hard to understand why a University press cannot sell for less than \$6.50 an unillustrated, partly subsidized, 260-page volume for which there is an assured sale of a thousand copies.

I have nothing but praise for the author's work on this volume. His excellent judgment and uncanny accuracy in handling the extraordinary amount of detail involved have resulted in a volume which will be of the greatest help to ornithologists everywhere.—Josselyn Van Tyne.